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THREE LETTERS,

&c.

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THREE LETTERS



[PRICE TWO CENTS]

W. H. M. 1877

THREE LETTERS

TO

A NOBLE LORD,

ON

THE PROJECTED

Legislative Union

OF

GREAT BRITAIN

AND

IRELAND.

BY A NOBLEMAN.

LONDON:

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Printed by J. Smith, No. 27, Pall Mall, London.
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Royal Library, No. 1, St. James's Palace.

1811

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THE following Letters were written at the request of a Veteran Statesman, who has been, for many years, retired from the walks of public life. They are the real sentiments of the Author, who, however little he may have approved the general conduct of the present ministry towards his Parent Country, considers the measure of the Union as the only one that can prevent the dismemberment of Ireland from Great Britain, either by her own intestine broils, or the conquest of the French Republic. They are now published, partly at the request of the Noble Friend to whom they were addressed, and partly with the hope of throwing some additional light on a subject of such great importance to the interests of the British Empire. The Author does not conceal his name, either from modesty, or pride; but because he is not anxious for literary fame. Each letter is printed, as it was first written; of course much elegance is not to be expected: He trusts, however, that his language will be found sufficiently correct, to make his arguments understood.

THREE LETTERS

BY

A NOBLEMAN.

LETTER I.*London, February —, 1799.*

YOU ask my opinion, my dear Lord, on a question as momentous as any that ever occupied the minds of Englishmen—the Legislative Union of Great Britain and Ireland; and wish me to communicate my sentiments with candour and freedom. Need I say, how much I feel flattered by your thinking I can furnish a veteran, like yourself, with any information on a subject, which has been already so ably discussed?

Long placed in a situation, which afforded you the fullest opportunity of knowing the political relations of all Europe, and more particularly of the Sister Countries, you must, from the vale of retirement, have contemplated, with the calm eye of reason and experience, the great events which have taken place, I may almost say, throughout the world. While I, fixed near the centre,
and

and being as it were a wheel of the vast machine, have hardly leisure to investigate its springs, or its movements. But attached to Ireland as my parent country, and anxious to further her true interests, the little leisure I possess has, for some time, been employed on this interesting subject ; and the result of my reflections will, I trust, prove that I have not failed to profit by the political lessons given me by your Lordship, in a very early period of my life.

The question of the union appears to me to resolve itself into three principal points—its influence on the Legislation (in which are partly comprehended the civil and criminal judicature,) the Commerce and Finances, and the Religion and Morals of the country. On each of these I shall give you my opinion, not forgetting such subordinate points as are worthy consideration.

A Union of the Legislature of the two countries, has long appeared to me the only means of putting a period to those intestine broils, which have unhappily, for some years, desolated the fairest part of the British Empire ; and proud as I am of the name of Irishman, and little as I have in many instances approved of the conduct of ministry respecting my native country, I cannot but consider the present opposition to the measure as, in some degree, the effort of National Vanity contending with National Advantage. That independence

dependence which has been so much the boast of my countrymen, and which they are now so zealously endeavouring to preserve, so far from being the source of her interest or her glory, has, in my opinion, been the source of all the miseries she has suffered.

I am well aware that this declaration will not add, at present, to the number of my friends on the other side the water; but I trust the period will arrive, when Great Britain and Ireland, linked in the strong bands of affection and union, will, by a consolidation of their interests, further each others prosperity and happiness, and by embracing the commerce, draw into their bosoms the greater part of the wealth of the earth;—when Ireland banishing those prejudices which she has (hitherto, perhaps, with some justice) cherished, and extinguishing the torch of civil discord, will consider the glory of the two countries as inseparable; and by uniting her efforts with those of Great Britain, bid defiance to that Colossal Monster, whose aim is to trample all Europe under its feet.

The avowed object of all Human Legislation is Human Happiness. Man, in a solitary state, found himself defenceless, and exposed to perpetual danger: this first pointed out the necessity of associating for the purpose of mutual defence and safety, and in this necessity we find the origin of
society

society, which being once formed, certain rules became necessary for its government. The number of these rules increased in proportion as man advanced in civilization, till, at length, by the introduction of science and letters, society assumed a more finished and perfect form, and traditional obligation gave way to written law. In large communities, however, it being almost impossible that every member should give his opinion on the regulations necessary for their government, the power of enacting this written law was delegated by the many to the few. This was evidently the progress of legislation, and the source of a representative legislature. But in order to enjoy all the advantages which ought to arise from such a legislature, it should have the full confidence of those by whom its powers are delegated ; and, by that means, ensure a prompt and willing obedience to the laws : for without such confidence, the obedience of the people will be merely constrained, and the military force of the state be constantly necessary, to enforce submission, and assist the civil power in the exercise of its functions, or all the horrors resulting from anarchy and intestine tumult follow.

This I conceive to be the present state of Ireland. Arrived at that period of civilization, when her legislature ought to possess universal confidence, and produce general happiness, she
regards

regards her parliaments with jealousy and distrust, refuses obedience to the laws, wastes her blood and vigour in internal war, and courts the aid of an ambitious foe (whom discontent has, for the moment, made her esteem as a friend) to enable her to throw off the yoke of that government, which she now considers oppressive. Treason and faction have availed themselves of the golden opportunity, and held out the deceptive lure of emancipation and independence; while individual ambition has cherished the most daring hopes, and aimed to lay the foundation of its own greatness on the ruins of the present constituted authorities.

In this extremity, would it not be puerile to suppose that the legislature, as now constituted, can ever regain the entire confidence of the people? For my own part, I think it impossible; and deprived of that, it ceases to be adequate to the purposes for which it was originally created. The interests of the people, therefore, require the present mode of legislation should be dissolved, and a new one substituted in its stead.

It may here be said, that a remedy can be found for the defects in the legislation of Ireland, much easier than that proposed. "Why," say the opposers of the union both in England and Ireland, "pull down a fabric which has stood so long, because there are some defects in the
"architecture?"

“architecture? Why not remove the imperfect
 “parts of the building and repair such as from
 “time are unsafe? If the present Parliament do
 “not possess the confidence of the people; why
 “not dissolve it; and call a new one?”—These
 questions, I am ready to confess, carry some
 weight with them; but I think it will be no
 difficult matter to prove, that the very principle
 of the present Irish legislation is defective; and
 that as long as it exists in its present form, it
 cannot be productive of the general good. Far
 be it from me to wish to destroy a fabric, because
 it has those imperfections which are inseparable
 from every thing that is human; but I contend,
 not only that the building is unsafe, but that the
 whole design wants Harmony, Order, and Beauty.
 Were we to dissolve the present Parliament, could
 we be certain that the succeeding one would have
 the entire confidence of the people? Experience
 leads us to conclude that it would not. Has the
 present more the confidence of the people, than
 the late Parliament? No. Did the late Parlia-
 ment possess more national confidence, than the
 preceeding? surely not. And there is one cause,
 which must ever stand in the way of that confi-
 dence, as long as Great Britain and Ireland have
 separate legislatures—the necessary dependence
 of the Irish Parliament on the cabinet of Great
 Britain. The lowest orders of the people in both
 countries

countries are not insensible that Parliament is, or ought to be, elected for their protection, and to further their interests. But the people of Ireland, from daily experience, find their Parliament has not extended that toleration in matters of religion, or those extensive privileges with respect to commerce, which the interests of the country seem to require. Hence has arisen that distrust, which has been the cause of intestine tumults, for half a century past. Nor can her Parliament, as now constituted, ever bestow the privileges, which Ireland so loudly asks: for as long as she exists as a separate and independent kingdom, Great Britain (whose organ the Irish Parliament must be) never can consent to trust her with those powers, which MAY BE USED AGAINST HERSELF! A union, therefore, so far from hindering, will be the only means of producing those immunities, which alone can promote the real interest and happiness of Ireland. Great Britain will then lay aside that jealousy which prudence, at present, bids her cherish, and cease to refuse the full participation of her own advantages to the sister country. United by affection and interest (as providence seem to have intended they should be) each will share the others glory, political distinctions vanish, commerce pour her treasures into every part of the Empire alike, and Arts, Science, and Manufactures bless the now

desolated plains of an Island, on which Nature has been lavish of every blessing.

In contemplating the recent miseries of Ireland, much is certainly to be imputed to the crafty and ambitious policy of the French Republic, which has long considered the dismemberment of the two countries, as the only means of humbling the present superiority of Great Britain. Unfortunately the radical defects in the Irish legislation, and the discontent which is the natural consequence of them, have afforded too ample opportunity for the dissemination of principles, decidedly hostile to all existing connections, and tending to subvert all established authority. France has availed herself of a moment so favorable to her views; and by promises of assistance, which the want of a formidable marine would not permit her to send, roused a generous and noble minded people to rebellion and massacre, in the suppression of which the blood and treasure have been wasted, that might have been employed in the protection of our colonies, or the achievement of foreign conquest.

But though the proximate cause of the present rebellion, is to be traced in the subtle and wicked policy of France, yet we certainly must look for its remote cause in the discontents arising from a want of confidence in the Parliament.

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Had Ireland been contented with her government, and happy within herself, would she have had recourse to the desperate expedient of embracing her natural foe, as her best friend? Would she have asked the aid of a foreign power to free her from her shackles, or have received an ambitious conqueror into her very bosom? Would she now, compelled to submission by the strong arm of military power, look forward with impatience for the period, when she can again "wake the sleeping sword of intestine war," † and (as many of her infatuated sons think) of Vengeance? For believe me, I am very far from thinking the rebellion at an end. Many of the heads of the Hydra have been cut off, and the humane policy of the present Viceroy (whose mercy stay'd the arm of the destroying angel in its course, ere it had slain four score and four thousand) has made the remainder shrink back ashamed; but the monster still exists, and, unless prevented, will again vomit its deadly poison o'er the country.

This is but a faint picture of the present state of Ireland. Possessed of natural advantages equal to any other country, she wastes that time in tumult, which, if employed in agriculture, manufactures, and commerce, could not fail to fertilize her plains, and enrich her inhabitants. Contending for that distinct Legislature (inde-

pendent,

† Shakespeare's Henry VI.

pendent I will not call it) which I think I have proved to be inadequate to the avowed purposes of all legislation, she refuses to consolidate her interests with a country, which alone is able to further her glory and happiness.

A brief review of the history of the legislature of Ireland, will furnish the most ample proofs of the truth of all I have asserted; and I may add, that in proportion as it has separated itself from that of Great Britain, the minds of the people have, by an anxiety about politics, been diverted from concerns of much greater importance. From whence, I would ask, have all the recent miseries of Ireland flowed? The answer is obvious—From Political Distinctions. And from what source, it may then be asked, have these distinctions arisen? From Ireland regarding Great Britain with distrust and jealousy, because she has not been allowed all the privileges she asked. Yet now that Great Britain offers her the full participation of all her legislative and commercial advantages, and stretches out her arm to bestow all those blessings of which she has been hitherto deprived, Ireland scorns the proffered boon, and determines to preserve that shadow of independence, which has been the cause of poverty, discord, and misery. This is a contradiction, of which the present opposition to the union of the two countries, furnishes the first example.

If Great Britain offered but a portion of her own advantages, Ireland might regard the boon with caution, and hesitate to receive it ; but this is not the case : she offers to share the whole of her advantages, as far as Ireland is capable of receiving them, and wishes her to become a part of herself. Does Great Britain possess no advantages which are worth participation ? If she does not, why has Ireland been dissatisfied ? Yet great as the advantages are she now enjoys, they would be almost doubled, by being united with those capacities for foreign commerce which the sister country possesses, in her numerous harbours and extensive line of sea coast. And it is a position too simple to be denied—that wealth would flow into Ireland, in proportion as Great Britain made use of those capacities. It is also equally manifest, that this cannot take place, till, by a union, they shall have coalesced into one people, and every political distinction be at an end. But of this I shall say more, when I come to consider the influence of a union on the Commerce and Finances of the Country.

I shall now proceed to examine some of the leading objections which have been urged against the measure. Many opposers of the union have asked—Why should Ireland, by giving up her legislature, risk the little independence she does possess, when it is possible she may, even then, be denied

denied the advantages now held out to her? This objection hardly deserves an answer. Is it possible that Great Britain can aim to oppress a country, by whose means she can increase her own commerce to so vast an extent? Will it not be her interest to further the prosperity of a country which supplies her armies with soldiers, her navy with sailors, and whose pastures furnish her fleets and her colonies with the greater part of their provisions? Will she not rather by every means strengthen that portion of the Empire, which is exposed to the invasion of her most inveterate foe, and by the assistance of which she can, at all times, bid defiance to the whole Earth? Will she not bestow on her Dock Yards, and suffer the Fleets, intended for her protection, to be built and equipped in her own Ports, as soon as their interests become the same, and she can do it with safety? In short, it is absurd to suppose, that Great Britain will not, by every means in her power, add to the strength, the prosperity, and the happiness of Ireland.

Another objection to the union, which at first sight carries more weight with it, is—that Ireland will not have more confidence in her Legislature, when united to that of Great Britain, than she has at present. But if the chief cause of the present want of confidence in her Parliament, be, as I have already stated—the being deprived of those

those immunities and advantages, which seem necessary to her interest, and an united legislature give her all she can reasonably ask, the objection falls to the ground. And it appears to me a position too plain to be denied—that if Ireland derive an increase of commerce and wealth from the union, she will soon be inspired with the fullest confidence in the new form of legislation.

With a corrupt legislature, it is universally admitted, no country can be happy; and it has been insisted, with much violence, that the representatives of Ireland, when united with those of Great Britain, will be constantly exposed to that undue influence, which will lead them to sacrifice the interests of their Constituents to their private advantage. Are then the channels of Corruption so confined, that they cannot flow into the sister country? And are her Parliaments safe from danger, if they avoid the vortex of the Cabinet of Saint James's? The firmest opposers of the union have ever held a contrary opinion; and uniformly declared, even in the senate, against the purity of the present legislature, averring that it was wholly corrupt, and altogether undeserving the confidence of the people. Yet they dread the corruption, if the Parliament be united—not surely of those who are already wholly corrupt? No: that cannot be; but they tremble, perhaps, lest the temptation should be
too

too great for their own steady and unshaken patriotism. In the event of a union, Great Britain can have no object, in what relates to Ireland, but the promotion of her happiness and prosperity; her Representatives can have no other; and where each part of the legislature mean the same, Corruption is not only unnecessary, but, in a manner, impossible. In short, if Great Britain and Ireland coalesce into one people, the latter cannot ask any privileges or advantages, which it will not be the interest of the former to grant. How, therefore, corruption is to be practised, when it can have no end in view, is a paradox indeed.

But, it has been further argued, "supposing
 "the members sent by Ireland to the Imperial
 "Parliament be men of unshaken virtue and
 "integrity—men above the corruptions of passion
 "or of interest, and honest in the discharge of
 "that solemn duty they owe their country—of
 "what avail will the votes of one hundred be, in a
 "senate composed of six hundred and fifty eight?
 "Will they not, on every great national question,
 "be left in minority?" Were it possible to
 separate the interests of the two countries, this
 objection would be very powerful; but as long
 as their interests are the same (which must ever
 be the case), the representatives of Ireland need
 not be apprehensive of their country being in-
 jured

jured, by a majority of English and Scotch members setting in the united legislatures. Can it, for one moment, be supposed, that Great Britain will refuse to invigorate that portion of the Empire, on which she relies so much for assistance, and by a union with which, she will be enabled to triumph over her foreign foes, and add so much to her already widely extended commerce? The number of Bishops in the British House of Peers is but twenty six; but it does not follow from this, that the interests of the Church have been neglected. On the contrary, the Temporal Lords have ever stood forward as the zealous defenders of her Rights. Even in the British House of Commons, as now constituted, the number of members sent by each county is small compared with the whole Representation. Yet not one of them complains of its Rights being trampled on, or its interests neglected: nor can this ever be the case, while they are united in affections and wishes, and participate equally of the protection and advantages afforded them by the British Constitution. But Scotland affords a still stronger instance, that the smallness of the number of Representatives, is no objection to the union of the two countries. The advantages she has derived from being united with Great Britain, are too well known for me now to dwell upon them. One thing, however, I cannot forbear

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noticing:—

noticing :—the Representatives of Scotland compose but one twelfth of the British Parliament ; yet I do not recollect a single instance of the Scotch members being left in a minority, on any question which related either to her Manufactures or Commerce. I might dilate on the rapid progress Scotland has made in Civilization and Wealth, since the period of the union ; but the task has been already so ably performed, that I do not think it all necessary.

One chief cause of the discontent of the people of Ireland, has been the non-residence of a great part of her nobility and landholders. This has impoverished the country, by drawing out of it, the produce of the Agriculture and Industry of the Peasant and Farmer. An increase of its capital has thus been in a great measure prevented ; and, of course, its progress in Manufactures and Commerce received a material check. Some recent provisions made by the Irish Legislature, have tended, though in a very small degree, to remedy the evil, which still exists, to an extent that produces general discontent. The anti-unionists have dwelt much on the probability of this non-residence being increased by a union of the legislatures ; but I think an attentive and calm investigation will enable us to place the probability on the other side of the question.

The non-residence of the Irish Nobility and
Landholders

Landholders seems to me to have arisen from three causes—The disorderly conduct of the lower orders of the people, (who, though they have never till lately hoisted the standard of rebellion, have seldom refrained, for any length of time, from acts of tumult and violence :)—The poverty of the country (arising merely from her natural advantages being neglected :) And their attendance at the British Court with a view to appointments in some department of the state.—But if a union, by restoring the confidence of the people in their Parliament, and bettering their present condition, put a period to intestine disorder—if by the Increase of Manufactures and Commerce poverty and discontent be removed—and if by a consolidation of the two Governments, the temptations to non-residence, and the incitements to corruption, be taken away—the Interest of the great Landholders will compel them to reside on their estates, the improvement of which will then occupy their whole attention.

It is a fact too well known to be denied, that splendid as the achievements of my countrymen have been in the Army and Navy of Great Britain, they have very seldom attained a high Rank in the State. I shall not attempt to enquire minutely into the causes of this; though it seems to me to have originated chiefly in the want of that plodding, mechanical perseverance and regularity

gularity of conduct, which has enabled our northern neighbours, in a manner, to engross the most honourable and lucrative situations in the ministry. It is evident, therefore, that the attendance of the Irish Nobility and Landholders at the Court of Saint James's, has not been with a view to appointments under the British, but the Irish government. If, however, a union of the two governments render a great part of the places in the civil line unnecessary, the temptations to non-residence will be lessened, and the landholder be compelled to seek for wealth, to supply his luxuries, from the improvement of his estate, the establishment of Manufactures, and the encouragement of Commerce. From these considerations, it appears to me, that a union, so far from encreasing, will, in the end, almost wholly do away non-residence, except as far as relates to the Representatives of Ireland in the Imperial Parliament, whose attendance will not, in general, be requisite more than half the year.

The resolutions of 1782, it has been contended, were calculated to bestow on Ireland all that was necessary for her interest or happiness. Has then Ireland been prosperous, has she been happy, since that period? Has not the history of the country afforded the most ample testimony, that these resolutions were inadequate to the purposes
for

for which they were made? Has not the experience of seventeen years tended to prove, that political distinctions have been increased by them? Has not their boasted independence produced a distraction in the minds of the people, which has ended in Rebellion and Massacre? Surely these facts establish, clearer than any reasoning or argument can, the necessity of a radical change in the method of her Legislation, a change which will enable her to share with Great Britain those advantages, which, by rendering her happy, will inspire a confidence in Government, that must ensure obedience to the Laws, and restore the blessings of Order and Peace.

The civil and criminal judicature of every country depend so much on its Legislation, that what I have said of the latter, may, in a great measure, be applied to the former, the Courts of Justice only explaining and enforcing the laws enacted by the Legislature; and in proportion as the Legislature wants the confidence of the people, the administration of the civil and criminal law becomes more arduous and difficult: because obedience is altogether constrained, and that is obtained by force, which would otherwise be a voluntary act. The present state of Ireland makes this position evident. The civil power, unable any longer even to enforce obedience, has been superseded by Military Tribunals, as
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the only means of protecting the peaceable part of the Inhabitants, against the lawless ravages and violence of the rebellious and disaffected. Yet the opposers of the union contend, that the administration of the laws will be pure and perfect, no longer than Ireland retains her independence. On the contrary, I am decidedly of opinion, that with this boasted independence, her Legislature never can have the national confidence, nor the streams of justice flow in a pure and unobstructed channel, without which, neither public happiness or individual safety can exist.

I have now only to consider a point, which has been argued with so much ingenuity on both sides—the Capacity of the Irish Legislature to dissolve itself; But if we strip it of the sophistry with which it has been so unnecessarily loaded, and recur to first principles, the question appears to me very simple. The object of Human Legislation is (as I have stated in the former part of my letter) Human Happiness; and as Legislatures originated in mens wants and necessities, and were formed for the general good, whenever they cease to be adequate to that purpose, the same wants and necessities which created them, require they should be dissolved, and new ones adopted in their stead. This is the case of the Sister Country: the present Legislature has been found incompetent to its avowed object; the
general

general good, therefore, demands its dissolution and the adoption of a new mode of Legislation.

I have thus, my dear Lord, considered the question of the Union of Great Britain and Ireland as far as relates to its influence on the Legislation of the latter ; and endeavoured to place it in as clear a light as I could, being sensible that, on subjects of Great National Import, direct argument is superior to refined reasoning and sophistry. My aim has been to trace the miseries of my parent country to their source, and point out the advantages that will result to her, from the adoption of a remedy which alone can snatch her from destruction ; and I trust, that as soon as she begins to discuss the question with temper, she will not fail to open her eyes to her real Interests, her Glory, and her Happiness.

Believe me, my dear Lord,

Yours, &c. &c.



LETTER II.

London, March —, 1799.

IN my former Letter, my dear Lord, I think I have proved that a Union, so far from depriving Ireland of her Legislative Independence, would be the only means of giving her Legislature that vigour, which is necessary to render it adequate to the avowed purposes of all Legislation; and shall now proceed to point out its probable influence on her Commerce and Finances.

That the riches of every country depend on her commerce, is a position too plain to be denied: for whatever internal wealth or advantages any country possesses, they cannot bring any increase of capital. It is from foreign sources only she can derive that, because to whatever extent internal commerce may be carried on, riches receive no addition, but merely change their possessor. Great Britain affords a strong instance of the influence of commerce on the wealth of a State: from an island, hardly of sufficient importance to invite the rapacity of a conqueror, she has risen to a
pitch

pitch of grandeur, unparalleled in the annals of history, and been able, for a century, to bid defiance to the united World, and almost give Laws to Europe. Ireland, on the contrary, though possessing greater advantages from nature, has advanced but with slow steps in wealth, from a neglect of those sources, whence alone it can be derived. Placed at one of the western extremities of Europe; with the shores of the new world opposite to her, and possessing an extensive line of sea coast, intersected with the finest bays and harbours, she seems intended, from her situation, as the main inlet to the produce of the East and the West. Unmindful, however, of these blessings, she has adandoned herself to political animosities, which have ended in the waste of her best blood, and the desolation of her fairest provinces.

If we trace the shores of Ireland from Carnfore Point, or Waterford, to Cape Clear,—from Cape Clear to Achill Head,—and from thence to the entrance of Lough Swilly, we shall be able to form some judgment of the natural capacities she possesses for an extensive commerce. But when we consider, how few ports, in so long a line, possess any foreign trade, it leaves room for the deepest regret, in the mind of every one who is anxious for her real interests. Waterford, Cork, Limerick, Galway, and Sligo, are, I believe,
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the only places which enjoy the advantages arising from Import and Export, to any extent ; and it is worthy remark, that the province of Connaught, though her Coast be a continuation of inlets, bays, and harbours, and though she possess from nature every capacity for the establishment of manufactures, calculated for the West India and American markets, is yet in the mere Infancy of Commerce, and (with respect to the lower orders of the people) of Civilization. This has arisen, next to the causes stated in my former letter, from the people not being sensible of the advantages of commerce, from the ignorance and superstition of the peasantry, and from the want of capital. A union, however, of the two countries, will soon remedy these defects, by inviting the Merchants of Great Britain to employ their capitals in establishing Manufactures, the produce of which being exported, will by its returns enrich the country ; and by the knowledge which wealth cannot fail to bring with it, soon banish that ignorance and superstition, which are at present the greatest obstacles to Civilization.

I am very far from meaning to apply what I have said with respect to the superstition and ignorance of the province of Connaught, to all its inhabitants. Its landholders and gentry are certainly a very polished, hospitable race ; and even the peasantry, notwithstanding their poverty,
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are generous, hospitable, and brave. But there is a national pride about persons of the smallest fortune, provided they possess only a competence, which teaches them to consider all commerce as in some degree disgraceful. Hence it is, that the younger sons of most Connaught landholders take to the Army, the Navy, or the Professions; and it is from this cause we find so many Irish officers in the armies of the Continental Powers, and, in some countries, filling the highest departments both in Church and State. The inheritance of their family being too small to maintain all its branches, and the army and the professions being overstocked, they are compelled to seek abroad for those Honours and Emoluments which are denied them at home. Thus the country is drained of a great portion of that vigour and talent, which, if properly employed, would produce her greatest prosperity and happiness. A union alone can prevent her long enduring the disadvantages arising from these causes. The introduction of English capitals, must increase the commerce, increased commerce must produce an increase of wealth, and that wealth speedily banish poverty and ignorance. Prejudices, however inveterate, will gradually give way, and merchantry be esteemed as honourable as the profession of arms, or any other. The mind even of the peasant will be enlarged, and
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the sun of knowledge soon dispel the darkness and superstition, which now obscure its powers and check its energies. Happy, in an increase of blessings, the lower orders will be inspired with confidence in the Government which bestows them, and Peace and Order succeed to War and Confusion.

But it may here be objected, that the influx of English capitals into Ireland, is by no means certain. I would ask those who raise this objection, whether any part of the known world holds out the temptations to speculators in Manufactures and Commerce, which Ireland does, particularly the southern and western parts? And if Great Britain possess a capital greater than her own Commerce requires (a thing which can hardly be denied, when we consider the ease with which Government has borrowed such immense sums on loans, for the prosecution of the war) can it be doubted that she will embark a portion of it, where it may be employed to so great advantage? It may also be asked, "If such are the lures to commercial speculations in Ireland, why have they not been tried long ago?" The reply is obvious—Because Great Britain could not trust her property in a country, which, from being under a separate Legislature, was distracted by political distinctions, and from that cause seldom, for any length of time, free from intestine

cessive tumult. But whenever Ireland, laying aside all distrust and jealousy, consents to place herself under the same government, and, by uniting her Legislature to that of the Sister Kingdom, coalesces into one people, then Great Britain will lend her capital, her shipping, and her manufacturers, to further Ireland's prosperity and glory.

Whatever observations I have made respecting the influence of a union on the commercial advantages of Connaught, apply, with increased force, to the province of Munster, the ports of which must, from their situation, be the keys to a great part of the trade between Great Britain and Ireland. Cork, Waterford, and Limerick have already from this cause, aided by their foreign commerce, more particularly with the West Indies and America, risen to a degree of opulence which bids fair to exceed that of Dublin itself; and in the event of the two countries being united, it cannot be doubted, that Munster will rapidly become one of the most opulent provinces of the empire. Placed opposite to that part of France, from whence alone she is able materially to annoy our trade, the interest of Great Britain points out the necessity of the establishment of dock yards, which will enable her to keep a large maritime force in that portion of her dominions, not only to protect it from invasion, but to convoy the merchandize constantly

stantly arriving from her eastern and western colonies.

The establishment of Dock Yards in Ireland, is an event from which so much good must result to the country, that I cannot forbear entering more fully into the subject.—In proportion as any state advances in foreign commerce, Fleets become necessary for its protection; and where the ancient enemies of that state, are maritime powers, without a formidable marine, she must be in constant danger of invasion. Ireland has felt this danger often; but never so much as during the present war. France, her inveterate foe (notwithstanding a paroxysm of madness has made her court her aid as a friend) has seen the disadvantages she laboured under, from not having fleets constantly on her coasts, and taking advantage of the period when the Elements drove the British Fleets into their own Ports, has three times attempted an invasion. In one instance she succeeded in landing troops; and, though in the other two, the naval Genius of Britain triumphed, yet Ireland cannot be considered safe till, by the establishment of Dock Yards, she possess a Marine always ready to guard her Coasts from insult. Had she, I would ask, possessed a formidable Marine in the Harbour of Cork, or the mouth of the Shannon, at the close of the year 1797, would one of the ships which transported

transported the troops under Genera Hoche have escaped? Or rather would France have been hardy enough to have made the attempt?

Such are the advantages which would accrue to Ireland from the establishment of Dock Yards, as far as relates to defence against invasion; but the advantages her trade would derive from the possession of an extensive marine, are incalculable. Beyond this, the vast field it opens to the ingenuity of her artisans and labourers, who would be employed in the various departments of ship building, promises no inconsiderable addition to the comfort and happiness of the lower orders of the people.

But, considered in a commercial point of view, it would open sources of trade, which she cannot otherwise enjoy. Great Britain, it is well known, procures the Pitch, Tar, Hemp, Iron, Masts, &c. used in ship building, from America, and the ports of the Northern Powers in the Baltic. In the event, however, of the establishment of Dock Yards in Ireland, the Irish Merchants would import these materials in exchange for their own manufactures, which, of course, would flourish in proportion as Foreign Markets received their produce. Thus, while the comforts of her artisans and labourers were increased on the one hand, her Merchants and

Manufacturers

Manufacturers would increase their wealth, and add to their capital, on the other.

Another probable consequence of a union would be the establishment of Depots by the East India Company, in some of the Southern or Western Ports of Ireland, the advantages arising from which are so obvious, as to render it almost unnecessary to point them out. At present, she receives the greater part of the East India goods she consumes, through the medium of the English Merchants: who, of course, calculate upon a great profit on this branch of their trade. But should the company establish Depots (which their Interest will loudly call on them to do) her Merchants will be enabled to buy the productions of the East in their own Ports, and keep the profit in their own hands. And it is by no means improbable, that Great Britain may encourage the exportation of East India goods from Ireland, in exchange for the naval stores of America and the Baltic, whenever the establishment of Dock Yards require them.

It may, however, be asked, and perhaps with some propriety, by the opposers of the union, what certainty there is, that the East India Company will establish Depots in Ireland? I admit that the recent resolutions of the British House of Commons, do not mention such a thing; but will not the interest of the Company in a manner compel

compel them to the measure? Will they expose the Merchandize, which they know must in the end be exported to Ireland, to the perilous navigation from the chops of the channel to London, in which so many millions of their treasure have been swallowed up, when they can land it in so many excellent Ports and Harbours between Carnfore Point and the Shannon, without exposing it to that hazard? Will they not derive considerable advantage from receiving in the Irish Ports, those goods, calculated for the Asiatic Markets, which they now procure through the English Merchants? Besides, if it be admitted, that the East India Company possessing establishments there, would be advantageous to Ireland, Great Britain, whose very existence requires the furtherance of her prosperity, cannot fail to bring about so desirable an object.

With respect to her general Commerce with America and the West Indies, the advantages to be derived from a union are beyond calculation: for without considering the trade to the former for naval stores, an increase of manufactures in articles of cotton, would call for a great importation of that article, which she would obtain in exchange for her Linen and Provisions, and export in a manufactured state to Spain, Portugal, the Ports of Mediterranean, the Hanse Towns, and the Baltic.

The influence of a union on the interior of the Province of Munster, would be not less than the influence on its commerce. Possessed of a hardy race of peasantry, a fertile soil, extensive pastures, and numerous rivers, it has every requisite for internal trade and extensive manufactures. That capital, which, I think, I have proved a union would give, alone is wanting, to enable it to arrive at the highest pitch of wealth and prosperity. Waterford and Limerick might be connected by means of a canal uniting the Suire with the Shannon; and an inland communication thus be opened between Saint George's Channel and the Atlantic. Of the advantages of this communication Cork might avail itself, by a canal uniting its harbour with the Suire, and channels thus be formed for the conveyance of the produce and manufactures of the internal parts of the province, to its principal Ports. The peasant would then throw aside the torpor, in which he has hitherto been sunk, and lured by the fair prospect Industry pointed out, arouse himself to exertion; Despair would give way to Confidence and Hope, and Plenty take possession of that seat, which Desolation has so long usurped.

The province of Leinster, though it has contained the seat of the government of Ireland from a very early period, is less calculated than any other of the four provinces into which the kingdom

dom is divided, to profit by the consequences resulting from a union. Hence, perhaps, has partly arisen the determined opposition it has given to the measure. Possessing a line of sea coast from the mouth of the Barrow to that of the Boyne, it has very few advantages for foreign commerce. The only three ports in that long line are Wexford, Dublin, and Drogheda, neither of which are either commodious or safe. The first, however, possesses a great superiority over the other two. The Harbours of Dublin, notwithstanding the trade she at present carries on, and the immense sums that have been expended in improvements, is still considered by mariners as very dangerous of access; and that of Drogheda, in its present state, is too small for a very extensive commerce.

But by the canal which unites the Liffey with the Shannon, the Boyne, and the Barrow, Leinster possesses advantages for internal trade, which a union could not fail considerably to improve. The produce of its Soil, its Mines, and its Manufactures, may, by the means of this inland Navigation, either be exported from her own Ports, or conveyed to Limerick, Cork, or Waterford. At the same time, I am ready to admit, that the commerce of Dublin could not increase at that rapid rate, which, it is probable, the Commerce of the Southern and Western Ports would.

would. Yet surely the interest of a single city, is not to be put in competition with those of the whole kingdom; and if the Merchants of Dublin think they can employ their capitals to greater advantage in Cork or Limerick, let them remove to those places.

I have now only to consider the probable consequences of a union on Ulster; and the advantages that Province would derive from it are so vast, I cannot but wonder at its opposition to the measure. Possessed of wealth, and advanced in civilization and knowledge, beyond either of the other Provinces, its inhabitants cannot be insensible, that these blessings were derived from their extensive Manufactures and Commerce, both of which would be speedily doubled by a union of the two countries. In what then it may be asked, does their opposition originate? It cannot, I think, originate in a dread of the measure being injurious to Ireland at large; but (if I may be allowed to hazard the conjecture) in a fear, that, by its happy effects on the other provinces, it may, in time, enable them to be formidable rivals in those branches of Manufacture, which they now almost exclusively possess. The policy and wisdom of the Northern merchants and manufacturers, may teach them to regard, with a jealous eye, the superior natural advantages of Connaught and Munster

Munster, for Foreign Trade, and to look forward with apprehension to that period, when by the fostering care of Great Britain, and the influx of English Capitals, those Provinces will become superior to Ulster in wealth, and extend their commerce to the four quarters of the Earth. But I would ask those who oppose the union on this principle, whether, if Connaught and Munster were to engross the greater part of the Foreign Trade of Ireland, it would strip the Inhabitants of Ulster of their ingenuity and industry, of their prolific soil, or of any of the means by which they have arrived at their present prosperity? Would it not, on the contrary, open a wide field for that ingenuity and industry, by enabling them to export their Linens to Foreign Markets from the ports of the South and West, instead of suffering them to pass through the hands of English Factors? Surely these arguments more than counterbalance all that can be drawn from the mistaken policy which, I know, actuates many of the most enlightened and wealthy men in the North of Ireland.

If we attentively consider the degree of opposition to the union, manifested by the four provinces, we shall find more truth in the conjecture I have just stated, than it may, at first sight, appear to have. Leinster (which has the least capacity to profit by it, and the capital of which,

which, Dublin, might even be injured, by its trade being in part transferred to the Southern Ports) early expressed the most decided disapprobation of the measure. Ulster (whose interest seemed likely to be affected by the increased commerce of the South and West, though I think it is evident that cannot be the case) followed next. While Connaught and Munster (which were capable of deriving such infinite advantages from it) were, at first, much inclined to favor it; and were, at length, only gained over to the present equipoise of opinion, by the opposers of the union appealing to their passions, and calling on them to protect their Independence, without entering at all into the real merits of the question, or considering whether a union would be beneficial to the country or not.

I wish it here to be understood, that, when I use the term equipoise of opinion, I only mean as far as relates to the higher Orders of the people, who alone have given their opinions in the various meetings that have been held: for I am convinced, from a great variety of information I have collected on the subject, that a considerable majority of the lower orders are most decidedly in favor of a union, considering it as the only means of rescuing them from their present degraded, miserable state.

But if Ireland possess all these great natural advantages

advantages for Commerce and Manufactures, say the opposers of the union, why does not Great Britain enable her to enjoy them, without requiring the sacrifice of her legislative independence? My reply is, that as long as Ireland retains a legislature, in which the people never can have the confidence requisite to ensure peace and order, Great Britain cannot bestow those immunities, or afford that assistance, with safety, which is necessary to raise her to any very considerable pitch of wealth and prosperity. Could Great Britain, I would ask, bestow on her Dock Yards and a formidable Marine—could she confide to her the produce of her Asiatic possessions, or trust her with a large capital, at a period like the present, when the country is desolated by internal war, and its Inhabitants stand with outstretched arms to receive a foreign conqueror? Yet Ireland never can be free from these calamities, while her present legislature exists. Let her then cease to be misled by that phantom of independence, in the pursuit of which she has so long abandoned her own happiness—let her by uniting with that people, whose interest ever must be the same as her own, indeed be free; and enjoy the full participation of those advantages which have made her Sister Country the envy and admiration of the whole Earth.

The resolutions entered into, in the year 1782,
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and the adjustment which followed, it has been asserted, were final, as far as related to the connection between the two countries. If we once admit this to be the case, we immediately deny the power of one Parliament to repeal the act of a preceding, and all legislation is at an end. Surely they cannot be considered final, from the good they have produced to the people at large. On the contrary, I would ask their most zealous defender, whether they have not tended to draw the attention of the lower orders from more important concerns, by increasing the political distinctions, which already existed in too great a degree? And whether we may not trace to this cause, in a great measure, the present distraction of the country? I readily admit they have had a very beneficial effect on Ireland's Commerce. But has even that increased in the same proportion with the Commerce of Great Britain? Or has it advanced with the rapid strides it would have done, had the two countries been united?

Some persons, who profess great zeal for the interests of Ireland, have gone so far as to assert, that if Great Britain longer refuse those immunities which they ask, the people of Ireland will become unanimous in calling in the assistance of France, to enable them to throw off their oppressive yoke, and obtain by force, what has hitherto been denied to their intreaty. Can then
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any force they are capable of exerting, wrest from Great Britain her Navies, her Merchandize, and her Capitals ? And without all these, Ireland can never arrive at wealth or prosperity. Can France give her a Marine, give her Commerce, and its attendant Wealth ? No : these are advantages which the Great Nation has not to bestow : these with all their train of blessings, Great Britain has drawn into her own bosom ; these she offers to her Sister Country : May her children not reject the proffered boon ! If however, Ireland be determined to proceed to extremities, let her be certain that France can afford the assistance she promises. It has been already promised for four years, but has not yet arrived ; nor do I think it ever can, while the British Navy maintains its present decided superiority. Yet admitting that France, notwithstanding this obstacle, elude the vigilance of our Fleets, and succeed in her present plan of Invasion, what advantage can she offer to compensate for those of which Ireland will be deprived, by her connection with Great Britain being dissolved ? I know the reply of the disaffected will be—Independence : Yes, that savage Independence, enjoyed by some of the petty Republics in the mountains of Italy, and on the shores of the Adriatic, which spurns Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce,

Commerce, and tramples under foot every thing, which can enoble or dignify human nature.

But does the conduct of France towards Holland, Switzerland, Tuscany, and Sardinia, leave the people of Ireland room to hope, that they will possess more independence under their conquerors, than they now do? O could I speak with the voice of an Angel, trumpet tongued, I would not cease to exert my eloquence, in warning my countrymen against the subtle policy and deceitful promises of a nation, whose ambition is only equalled by its treachery, and whose object has long been to establish the anomalous fabric of its own government, by destroying the peace and happiness of every other state.

Having thus taken a review of the probable influence of a union, on the commerce of the four provinces of Ireland, I shall now consider some leading objections that have been made to the measure. Why say the anti-unionists, if a union promise such great benefits to the country, are the people so unanimous in rejecting it? Are they not better judges of their own interest, than the British Cabinet can possibly be? These questions I own, have much force. But though the party adverse to the union have made the most noise, it does not follow that they are the most numerous. Besides, I would ask, has the question been, at present, fairly discussed? Has it been considered

considered with that temper, which every great national question ought to be? Has it been rejected, in any instance, on the ground of its inexpediency, or because it was likely to be prejudicial to the country? On the contrary, its opposers have almost uniformly appealed to the passions, rather than the reason, of the people; have invoked the aid of National Prejudice in favour of a separate legislature, and wholly misrepresented the intentions of the British Cabinet. They have made them anxious to preserve the shadow of Independence, which they do not really possess; and, in short, taught them to grasp the airy Phantom, which has hitherto been the cause of poverty and misery, and spurn at that intimate connection of the two countries, from which they might derive so many solid advantages.

The resolutions of the City of Dublin have afforded great room for the triumph of the anti-union party. But if we trace the opposition of that place to its true source, we shall, perhaps find it has originated in more selfish motives, than is generally supposed. These motives I have already hinted at in a former part of the present letter, and shall now consider them more at large.

Dublin, though the Metropolis of Ireland and the seat of Government, has but few natural advantages for an extensive commerce; and

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were she stripped of the wealth she derives from concentrating within herself, for a great part of the year, so many of the Nobility and great Landholders, either compelled thither by their Parliamentary Duty, or invited by the gaiety and pleasures, which are, in a manner, inseparable from the capital of every kingdom, it is probable she would not long continue to increase her Population, Trade, and Buildings, in the manner she has done since the year 1782. Placed at the head of a bay not exceeded in beauty by any in Europe, but whose navigation has only attained its present safety, at an expence almost incalculable, she is deprived of the advantages, which might be derived from a navigable river to transport her Merchandize into the interior country. This defect has certainly, in a great measure, been supplied by canals, which now connect her Harbour (for the Liffey is not navigable much more than two miles) with the three principal rivers, the Shannon, the Barrow, and the Boyne. But should a period arrive when the ports of the South and West extend their commerce, and trade not be, in a manner, lured to Dublin by the vastness of its population, and the great fortunes, from every quarter of the country, annually spent there, Foreign Merchants will dispose of their goods at the first ports they arrive at, without exposing them to the navigation of the Irish Ocean, and the hazardous entrance

entrance of the Harbours of Leinster. The Inhabitants of Dublin could not be unmindful of these considerations, and determined to destroy, if possible in its birth, a measure, which held out so little prospect of advantage to them, though pregnant with blessings to the whole kingdom beside. Hence has originated, for the most part, the decided opposition they have manifested to a union of the legislature of the two countries.

The resolutions of that formidable Body of Men, the Lawyers, I am fearful, originated in a not less interested motive. A discontented and impoverished country has ever been the most fruitful in litigation. Of the truth of this observation Ireland is a very strong instance ; and it is not, perhaps, going too far to assert, that in proportion to her population and wealth, more money is expended by her in litigation in one year, than is expended in England in two. But a union, by extending the Commerce and Manufactures of the Country, and opening the eyes of the people to their real interests, could not fail to extinguish, in some degree, that litigious spirit from which the professors of the law now derive such immense profits. Is it then to be wondered at, that they should be foremost in opposition to the measure ? Suppose the interest of Ireland required the abolition of
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the Excise, would it be matter of astonishment that the Excisemen should vote for its continuance? However much this question may offend the Irish Bar, I cannot but think the cases have a great analogy. At the same time, I am sensible, that many Barristers of the most splendid talents and approved integrity, voted against the union, from motives widely different from that I have just stated. Still, however, the people at large should receive with extreme caution, the resolutions of any body of men, whose majority may have voted as their interest dictates.

Yet, say the anti-unionists, admitting that the resolutions of the Irish Bar might proceed from interested motives, that objection cannot apply to the Members of the House of Commons who rejected the measure of a union. I admit, it cannot : I know that most of them are men above the seductions of interest. But is it certain that none of their votes were influenced by private ambition or national vanity? Is it certain that every one of them had previously investigated the question, with that attention and calmness, which its importance required? Or was the whole of the talents and wealth of the country, in opposition to the measure? I believe it will be found, that equal talents and wealth were for its adoption; and though among its opposers we find the high name

name of FOSTER, yet among its warmest friends we find the venerable name of CONOLLY.

Many other objections have been urged, on both sides of the water, against the proposed union; but as few of them apply to its principle, and such as do, have been considered in my first letter, it is unnecessary to answer them here. Not one, I believe, of its most zealous opponents, however, has ventured to deny the advantages, which the Commerce of Ireland would derive from it; and I think I have proved, that it is by Commerce alone, she can arrive at any very high pitch of prosperity or grandeur.

The history of modern Europe affords many instances of States emerging from poverty and obscurity to Wealth and Grandeur, by the influence of Commerce, which, while it increases civilization, is the best patron of the arts and sciences. To what do we owe the revival of Arts and Learning in the Fourteenth Century, in Italy, from whence they have gradually spread themselves over the greater Part of Europe, but to the fostering care of the De Medici, (a race of Merchants), and the Wealth of the Republic of Florence, acquired by her Commerce? To what do we owe the discovery of the New World, and our knowledge of the East, by the passage round the Cape of Good Hope, but to that commercial spirit, which is constantly exploring new sources
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of Trade and Riches? To what does Great Britain owe that superiority, which she has possessed over the other nations of Europe, for more than a century, and which has enabled her to extend her Colonies to the remotest parts of the Earth, but to her Commerce? Compare modern Egypt with what she was under her Ptolomies, when the trade of the East flowed into her ports, and her Kings esteemed Merchantry honourable; or the present poverty of Spain with the wealth she enjoyed, from her extensive Commerce, under Ferdinand and Charles the Fifth. Compare the present insignificance of the Republics of Genoa and Venice, with the grandeur they possessed under their Durazzos and their Dorias; or the state of Britain, at the period when she became an easy prey to a band of barbarians, with her present prosperity and glory, by which, she forms the only counterpoise to a power, whose ambition grasps at universal Monarchy;—And some idea may be formed of the consequences resulting from extensive Commerce. May Ireland, by a closer union with that country, whose interests are inseparable from her own, and who now offers the full participation of every blessing she enjoys, afford another splendid instance of its advantages!

Believe me, my dear Lord, &c, &c.

LETTER III.

London, March —, 1799.

THE prosperity and happiness of every State, my dear Lord, are so intimately connected with its Religion and Morals, that a prudent Legislature, while it endeavours, on the one hand, to banish superstition, by the dissemination of science and knowledge, will, on the other, take care to preserve the due influence of moral and religious obligation.

When we consider the rapid progress which Great Britain has made in Knowledge and Wealth, during the last century, we are almost led to wonder at the superstition and poverty of the Irish peasant, inhabiting an Island, separated from her only by a narrow channel. Part of this poverty, we shall find, has had its source in the Catholic Religion, the ill consequences resulting from which, to the prosperity of the country at large, may be judged of by its effects on each province. Connaught, where the Catholics compose nine tenths of the Inhabitants, is, with
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respect to the poverty and ignorance of the lower orders, more wretched than either of the other provinces. Munster, in which they consist of four fifths, and Leinster, in which they consist of near three fourths, have made considerable advances in civilization. While Ulster, in which they are equalled in number by the Protestants and Dissenters, is in wealth and manufactures far beyond any other province in the kingdom. I shall, however, consider the Religion and Morals of the four provinces more fully, together with the probable influence of a union on each of them.

The people of Connaught have, from a very early period, professed the Roman Catholic Religion, which is made up of external Rites and Ceremonies, and whose priests inculcate, as the highest morality, the doctrine of a blind obedience to the will of the Church. In this obedience has originated that superstition and ignorance, which have so long repressed the energies, and blinded the eyes of the lower orders to their real interests. The priesthood knew that increase of wealth, could not fail to bring increase of knowledge, and that increase of knowledge must speedily remove that Bigotry, by which they maintained so absolute a sway over the minds of the people. For this reason their whole power has been exerted to keep the peasantry in their present abject state; and they have, unfortunately,

unately, succeeded too well. Though it must, at the same time, be admitted, that while they defended the Rights of the Church with so much zeal, they also preached the necessity of obedience to the Government; and that, notwithstanding their poverty, the Loyalty of the Inhabitants of Connaught has been, till very lately, equal to that of any part of the British Empire. The ferments produced in their minds by the violent discussion of the great question of Catholic Emancipation, was certainly the first cause of this disloyalty; and the partisans of Rebellion, taking advantage of a moment so favorable, by the promises of a full participation in the affairs of the State, and the total abolition of all incapacities arising from difference of Faith, introduced principles, subversive of Order, and won over the deluded multitude to the most daring attempts against that Government, which they had, till then, looked up to with respect, and in some degree, confidence.

I shall not attempt here to discuss the important question of emancipation, as far as concerns Ireland: But I cannot refrain from declaring, that I think an established Religion necessary to every well regulated State; and that I should tremble at bestowing power on a Faith, which delights in the blood of its adversaries, and whose followers may be roused to acts of violence and rebellion

rebellion, at the call of Bigotry or Fanaticism. Still the period cannot be remote, when the Roman Catholics will lay aside that persecuting intolerant spirit they now possess, and then Great Britain cannot refuse them emancipation in its fullest extent.

Commerce, as the parent of riches and knowledge, has ever been the greatest foe to the Religion of the Church of Rome: for wherever its influence has extended, superstition has given way. The history of Holland, the Low Countries, the Hanseatic League, and Great Britain, are strong proofs of the truth of this assertion; and I think, it cannot be doubted, that if Manufactures and Commerce were introduced into the Province of Connaught, and carried to that extent, which, from her natural advantages, they might be, the Roman Catholic Religion would in a great measure lose its ascendancy, and perhaps, in time, the number of its followers be more than counterbalanced by that of the members of the present Established Faith. The discussion of the question of Emancipation would then be unnecessary, and Religious Distinctions vanish. At all events, I think it certain, that if the present disaffection of the Catholics proceeds from their Political Incapacities, a union alone would enable Great Britain to do away those incapacities with safety to herself, by making the interest of Ireland inseparable

inseparable from her own. And I think it equally certain, that difference of Religion would be little attended to, in any Country which possessed an extensive Commerce, with all its attendant train of blessings.

The greater part of what I have said respecting the influence of an Union on the religion of the province of Connaught, applies with, perhaps, increased force, to that of Munster. Possessed of a more extensive line of sea-coast, and superior natural advantages, the latter would probably in the event of a Union, advance in commerce and manufactures, with more rapid strides than the former; and by that knowledge which they ever bring, speedily banish the superstitious prejudices, which now fetter the minds of the lower orders, and by checking all improvement, tend to keep them in their present wretched state.

The peasantry of Munster, it must be admitted, by the commerce of the ports of Waterford, Cork, and Limerick, have bettered their condition, in some degree, and are not so much under the influence of their priests as those of the province of Connaught; but it appears to me, that their advances in morality have not been very great. A lawless spirit of rapine has long existed in many of the counties, which has prevented the introduction of manufactures. The peasant, groaning under his poverty, and regard-
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ing the higher orders as his oppressors, has been goaded on to consider the plundering them, as merely reclaiming his own. Hence have, in a great measure, originated the robberies, which, even before the present rebellion, disgraced the southern parts of Ireland. Besides this, no part of the kingdom has been so violent in opposing the payment of tithes, which has constantly been productive of serious tumults, and acts of cruelty towards those persons employed by the Clergy as collectors.

These circumstances had prepared the minds of the lower orders for the principles, which the Agents of France disseminated, with so much industry. A full Emancipation in religious matters, and a participation of the Government of the Country, was promised; and Treason, assuming the garb of Fanaticism, roused the peasant from the torpor of Despair, to active Rebellion and Massacre. This spirit of rebellion and rapine, roused to the extent it now is, I will not be easily suppressed; and though the strong arm of Military Power at present keeps it under, yet I am convinced, nothing can wholly destroy it, but that Union of the two Countries, which, by ameliorating the condition of the peasantry, and bestowing on them the blessings arising from extensive Commerce and Manufactures, shall free their minds from the trammels of
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of Superstition and Ignorance, and banish those Prejudices and Distinctions, which have hitherto produced only Discord and Misery.

The subject of Tythes, which I have just mentioned, is one, which will, in the event of an Union, loudly call for the Interference of the Legislature; and however far I am from agreeing with those who rashly demand their total Abolition (for were they abolished, the destruction of the Established Church must follow), I am decidedly of opinion, that they require many modifications. Deprive the Irish peasant of a tenth of his crop, and, in many instances, you deprive one tenth of his family of the means of existence. Even in England, where the wealth of the farmer prevents him suffering this inconvenience, Tythes are, by many, considered not only as impolitic, but oppressive. I own, I am of a contrary opinion; but still the poverty of the greater part of the farmers in Ireland, requires that the Tythe Laws should be amended, more particularly as to the manner of collecting them. The Proctors, who are employed by the Clergy, for that purpose, are more odious to the lower orders of the People, than can be well imagined on this side the water; and they, for the most part, merit the treatment they experience.—Ten, or even more parishes, are often farmed out to one Proctor, and produce the Clergy an
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Income of not more than 700l. or 800l. a year; while the Farmer-Proctor lives in affluence, and even amasses a considerable fortune, from the surplus. To increase this surplus, the poor peasant is stripped of a great part of the hard-earned produce of his labour. The Church, therefore, is not the oppressor, but its Agents; and I am persuaded, that if no more was paid for Tythes, than the Clergy really receive, the discontents of the lower Orders, on that head, would soon be done away. At all events, the enormities practised by the Tythe-Proctors, are so glaring, as to demand the serious Attention of the Legislature; and I am sure, that a Union will not fail to produce those salutary regulations, which will prevent all future excesses, and, by removing this great cause of dissatisfaction, increase that Confidence in Government, which will speedily further the Happiness of the People.

Leinster, with respect to Religion (if we except the counties in the neighbourhood of the Metropolis), is in nearly the same state as Munster. In the city of Dublin, the number of Protestants, including the various Sects of Dissenters, considerably exceeds that of the Roman Catholics; but the Southern parts of the province are constantly exposed to those tumults which I have just stated to be so detrimental to Munster. Indeed, religious distinctions

tions have been carried to as great a pitch in the Counties of Wicklow, Wexford, and Kilkenny, as in any part of Ireland; and recent events have clearly shewn, that the spirit of discontent and rapine, is more violent in Leinster, than in either of the other Provinces. The County of Kildare first hoisted the standard of open Rebellion, and it was carried from thence southward, the number of its followers hourly increasing, till a formidable army, or rather banditti, was collected in the county of Wexford, which it required the united force of both countries to disperse.

I am well aware that the province of Leinster, from containing the Metropolis, has been generally supposed to be well affected to Government; but I am convinced, from my own observation, that the lower orders of its inhabitants are, for the most part, as wretched, and consequently as discontented, as those of the other parts of the kingdom; and I am also certain, that nothing short of the general amelioration of their condition, which the introduction of Trade and Manufactures would produce, can remove that Bigotry and Ignorance, which have been the sources of so much Poverty and Discord. In short, if a Union produce wealth, the people, rendered more happy, will soon cease to cherish the spirit of discontent, and religious prejudices

be forgotten in the advantages and comforts they will enjoy: Knowledge will soon be generally diffused, and Order and Loyalty succeed to Tumult and Disaffection.

The province of Ulster is, with respect to Religion and Morals, much before either of the other provinces. This is to be traced to three causes—its Manufactures, its Commerce, and the number of its Protestant inhabitants.—At the time of the Restoration, in the last century, many of the Puritans, as they were then called, sensible that their conduct during the civil wars, and the existence of the Commonwealth, rendered them obnoxious to the new Monarch, and too proud to submit to the humiliation which they knew must follow, removed to the North of Ireland, carrying with them the ingenuity and industry, which they had exercised in their native country, more particularly in the manufacture of Linens. Previous to this period, Ireland had no staple article of commerce; and it is to this circumstance, she owes the introduction and establishment of the Linen Trade in Ulster, where it has flourished to an extent, that has enriched the country, and rendered the lower orders of the people, prosperous and happy, compared with the other provinces. With their manufactures, the puritans also carried their religion, which gained ground very rapidly,

rapidly, and the number of Dissenters, in the course of half a century, almost equalled that of the Roman Catholics in several of the largest counties. The faith of the puritans has ever been hostile to monarchical governments; and, though the protestant dissenters of the North are less violent in political matters, than their ancestors were, yet there is still, a considerable portion of Republicanism in their composition. The great attention, however, paid by them, to their manufactures and commerce, and the prosperity they produced, has, in a great measure, prevented politics being much attended to, or interfering with their more important concerns. The shock, however, produced by the French Revolution, on all Europe, was felt in Ireland, and the emissaries of France laboured, with great zeal, to rouse the latent spark of Equality, which had been smothered for upwards of a century. Success, in part, crowned their endeavours, and Treason, for some time, banished Order and Industry. But the inhabitants of the north soon saw through the delusion, and found, that in grasping the shadow, they had lost the substance. The number of the disaffected gradually decreased, and they returned to their manufactures and trade, convinced that from them alone, they could derive wealth and happiness: But if disaffection still exists among them, it can only arise from their religious inca-

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pacities, which a Union will tend to remove; discontent will then vanish, and the people pay a willing obedience to the Government, which bestows on them so many blessings.

Such would be the influence of a Union, on the religious distinctions, which now distract the four provinces. Commerce and Manufactures would soon banish Superstition and Ignorance, and the spirit of Rapine and Disorder, be succeeded by the peaceful habits of Content and Industry. A proper sense of moral obligation would follow, and difference of opinion on matters of Faith, be forgotten, in the general good all ranks would experience.

I have thus, my Lord, considered the important question of the Union, in its influence on the Legislation, the Commerce, and the Religion of the sister country. Actuated by no motive, but a wish to further her interest and happiness, I have reviewed it on each of these points, without personal reference, even to its most zealous opposers. It is for measures, not men, that I contend; and I trust, the arguments I have adduced, will satisfy you, that until she wholly unites with Great Britain, Ireland never can be prosperous, great, or happy.

Believe me,

My dear Lord, &c. &c.



